

**Interview with Shirley M. Marshall and her daughter Annabel Baer
conducted by Linda Byrne for the
Providence District History Project
Providence Perspective**

March 23, 2010

Linda: This interview is in regard to a 1937 aerial map of Oakton which they have donated to the history project. Today is March the 23rd 2010 – my name is Linda Byrne and I am here with Shirley Marshall who is with her daughter?

Shirley: Annabel (Baer)

Linda: Shirley and Annabel have just dropped off at Supervisor Smyth's office a wonderful aerial map of Oakton Virginia. How are you today Shirley?

Shirley: Very well thank you.

Linda: Could you tell me a little bit about the map and a little about yourself and your family.

Shirley: Well we came here in 1963 and we knew Dr. Handy and Mrs. Handy before that [Shirley's grandson is talking in the background to his mother Annabel] and they lived on Marbury Road in Oakton, which is just off Hunter Mill Road about a mile in from Chain Bridge Road. They had a farm which they stayed part of the year and the rest of the year they were in Hawaii because Dr. Handy did anthropological research. Now what else would you like to know? About the farm or?

Linda: Well we also have your grandson here and his name is?

Shirley: Alexander

Linda: Hi Alexander

Alexander: Hi

Shirley and Linda: [chuckling]

Linda: We are here sitting in a car and we are hoping for warmer weather. It's a little windy. But yes if you could tell me about your husband and his connection to Dr. Handy.

Shirley: Yes, my husband was an anthropologist interested in Polynesia and the Marqueses of which Dr. Handy had done research much earlier. And so that was the connection. And they met in probably it might have been the late 40's early 50's.

Linda: Ah huh.

Shirley: And then they – when we moved down here we saw them at least every once in a while. But they spent their time between Hawaii and Twa Burnie as they called their place. And it was a farm and we first

Linda: And it was called what again.

Shirley: Twa Burnie, T-w-a B-u-r-n-i-e and they had it as a farm. They had a horse or two and at one time when we first came in 63' they I think they – I don't know whether they had a cow or not but they at sometime there had been chickens there on the farm. The place I believe has since been developed as very luxurious houses. But at the time it was a farm house with another cottage on the property. And I remember picking mushrooms out in the field with them; because they grew so well. But they were just delightful people to know. And he and his wife Elizabeth Green Handy did a small book on Woodrow Wilson

Linda: oh.

Shirley: They did research for from here.

Linda: Do you recall the title?

Shirley: I think that just Woodrow Wilson the early youth or something, because I know that they sent a friend a classmate of ours to Ireland to do some research before they went. And so quite interesting; there are all these connections.

Linda: Yeah.

Shirley: But they really – Dr. Handy had spent a lot of time as I say in the Marquises' with his first wife Wilodean Handy and it was later that he bought this place Twa Burnie with the second wife.

Linda: About how large do you think the property was?

Shirley: Oh, a number, quite a number of acres.

Annabel: About a hundred and eighty wasn't it.

Shirley: It was quite a lot.

Linda: Quite a large piece.

Shirley: Yes.

Linda: Yeah

Shirley: So there was ah at the time when you turned in on the left there was no – there were just fields on the opposite way turning into Marbury Road.

Linda: ah huh.

Shirley: And you went maybe a quarter of a mile and then turned in but there weren't any houses on either side until you got to their driveway on the right. And there was a house across the way from them. But then you turned in and there were fields and there were several buildings, farm buildings on the property; plus the cottage and the farm. And then it went

down to a small brook I don't know whether it is Difficult Run or what one is down there.

Linda: Ah hum.

Shirley: But the property went down to that. It was delightful.

Linda: Oh, that must have been lovely.

Shirley: Yes.

Linda: Yes, well.

Annabel: Didn't they have an antique car? It was a model A or model T? We use to play in it – it had a hornets nest in it.

Shirley and Linda: [Laughing]

Annabel: But we braved it just because it was so much fun and I remember that there was a bull in the field that was rather scary - as a child.

Shirley and Linda: [Laughing]

Linda: Oh

Annabel: But it was loads of fun to explore because it was this huge farm.

Linda: Oh wonderful.

Annabel: There was lots of property and there was lots of stuff to do.

Linda: Annabel do you have any other memories?

Annabel: I just remember taking an occasional day trip out to the country.

Linda: And you were going from?

Annabel: And we were going from Alexandria, the City of Alexandria out to Oakton. And this was a day in the country complete with, yeah, farm animals a few, but I remember the bull in particular; Um and the old car and just the farmhouse and it was just great as a kid just to explore – because it just went on forever. But we always loved going out there and the Handy's were really nice. And very accommodating considering that they were 4 of us kids that would come out. And when you have four kids you don't always get invited everywhere.

Shirley: laughing.

Linda: Annabel what is your full name now?

Annabel: Oh, Annabel Jean Marshall is my maiden name, Baer but I go by Annabel Jean Baer now.

Linda: Great, well I, I really thank both of you so much um for sharing your thoughts about the map and the area and what it represents.

Shirley: More than welcome, more than welcome.

Linda: Thank you

NOTE:

(Before we began the interview Shirley told me that the cottage on the property had been used for storage of many books etc. When Dr. Handy died Shirley's husband inherited a portion of Dr. Handy's estate. Shirley's husband told the family he only wanted books and that is how he acquired the map which is a 1937 aerial of the Oakton Area. Annabel recalled that when her parents went to the farm to retrieve the items Dr. Handy had wanted Shirley's husband to have there was mold and mildew which had ruined much of the legacy.)